

Mary A. Walker

143 Davy Street

Hobart.

Monday

Bushy. September 29th 1890.
Proposed talker to women students only

When I mentioned to a student that I was going to give this lecture she said "Oh! are you going to put on more dampers?" Not at all I am going on the contrary to be in many ways very encouraging. In my weekly visits to the Studio Ladies' Lip Room I am often struck with the high average of the work, it is often distinctly higher than the men's. But in the men's room there are generally two or three students who do such work and never reached by the women - you never cross the border line of high average excellence & why? I have called you together

this afternoon to tell you what I
really think of women students.
I have often expressed my opinion
on the subject, but as it has filtered
down through masculine minds
I fear it may have been distorted.

I have never said that
women should not take up art,
but I do say that it is not women's
highest mission. Matrimony &
not art is the highest ideal of a
woman's life, but it must come
naturally. Matrimony is not to be
run to ground like a fox, & of course
it cannot come to all. When it does
come, then I say emphatically art
must be given up at least if there
are children, if not it may be
carried on, I do not know.
But a woman who leaves her

her baby because she has an interesting
model is not a true woman.

In the meantime a girl is justified
in taking up art, but she must give
up everything for it. You are many
of you, too fond of sociality; you
make art an adjunct. The man do not
do this, & I think that may be one reason
why you fail. Sociality may be
an adjunct to art, but art & sociality
never. Then you must give up all
other duties. No artist can work
properly in his parents home, I speak
from experience. Much as I loved
my father & mother, my art called
me away from them. & it was such
grief to me that it gives me the
greatest pain to tell you that it
must be done if you would succeed.

Miss Briddland, who has in

the only woman student ^{in the Schools} who has passed
the boundary. has I know from personal
observation often neglected her duties
as a daughter. But she has led
the life of a true artist. What will
become of her now she is engaged,
I don't know; it is her misfortune
& perhaps not her fault. But
understand cannot take interest
in you after you become engaged
I am willing to train you to become
artists but not to become painter
wives.

And although I wish to impress
upon you that you come here as
men, I do not wish mean that you
must copy their work under the impres-
sion that womanish work is simply
womanly work. Oh yes some of the most
manly manly work I have seen

is man's word, that I will say. There is
in Miss Cridland's work a womanly
interpretation of nature that no man
could produce. And in some designed by
Miss Sawyer, there is a delicate fancy
that could only come from a woman's
imagination. 3

You as a set are better read. I don't
think that it is lack of imagination
— women are not supposed to matter
of fact! It may be a lack of concentra-
tion — you flitter about rather like
butterflies. And on this subject I
can speak with great feeling as it
is the great weakness in my own
character. But I manage myself,
I dodge myself, I by having many
pictures in hand at once, I compel
myself to be always at work. When
I was a boy I never finished any-

thing, although I began 1000 things,
but now I have so far conquered that
this ^{weakness} thing is only known to myself.
I confess it to help you. I don't like
to confess my faults, it's not nearly
so pleasant as talking about my
virtues. You must fight, I never
hope to reach a point where you will
not have to fight. As happy as I am
now in my family life, every day of
my life is a battle, and I will
never cease to fight until I take
my last breath.

Then you are too timid, too
afraid of new ideas. You always
copy somebody else. When an idea
comes into your head you immediately
try to remember how someone else
has rendered it. Never be afraid
of what people say. - paint your

own ideas, I point what you see around
you. Paradox as it may sound —
"What is most human is most
"divine"

Of course many of you do
not possess the necessary talent to
become artists, & when week after
week I see no progress in the studies
I feel obliged to say to that student —
"You must go". It may be want
of health that prevents progress.
Another thing, you do not trust in
yourselves sufficiently. You talk about
being depressed. I have never heard
that word from the men's room.

In conclusion, don't think
that I don't believe in you, ^{I believe in you} ~~no~~
thoroughly. but let me see you
get over the border line. You know
how much your success is to me,

it gives me far more pleasure than
my own Success.

2nd. 90. Subject making

This Subject is so wide that it is
very difficult to talk to you about
so must give you several lectures
before I can hope that you will
grasp what I mean. You are now
most of you only beginning your art
life, but you must so strive as to
make every step of your upward
way, a glorious step. Many of the
artists of the present day rot, yes
rot. I can express it in no other
way. They keep to the same kind
of Subject when they are 60 as when
they were 20. This should never
be, a man's character is always
& whole being is always changing

It should be growing. The change may
be effected by many things, such as
his friends or Success or different
Surroundings.

A man's sun should set gloriously,
even if he is below the horizon his
rays should be full of beauty & power.
I can tell you of one artist who is
doing this. We cannot say that his
sun is already below the horizon, but
the visions that he sends us are like
messages from another world. I mean
Watts. Look at his picture of Love
& Death, & Hope. You realize
that tho' they have not been painted
in the fulness of his power, yet
they are glorious visions. We all
could name living artists who
are dead as far as their work
is concerned, that is they are

rotting.

In choosing a Subject
never go to books, I tried that
myself when I was young to my
cost. Books only help you to see
nature better than you did before
but go direct to nature herself,
& take for subjects the scenes
that are being enacted day by day
around you; the simpler the better
— the most beautiful pictures
are often the simplest.

And all the time you are
studying art, educate & make
to glow every other part of you,
so that when your school time
is over you may not be barren
of all ideas.

True technical excellence
is of no use in art, in fact,

(this is what is so pitiable in the
French School), clever workmanship
is often most depressing as a student
who possesses that power has fre-
quently no originality of ideas.

Pictures may be divided into 4
~~two~~ classes:—

Narrative, Description, Poetical,
Allegorical. By Description I
mean the painting of a passing in-
cident.

Now the Salvation Army gives
great scope for a subject picture,
& Johnson is to attempt it. There
is the great difficulty that he felt
at once, of knowing how to manage
a crowd. In a crowd, you must
as a rule have an interesting
group of figures quite in the
foreground, as in the "Last Muster"

it is necessary to be most careful about line. Be as realistic as you like, but poetical as well, & to be realistic does not necessarily mean that you are to put in every word & detail but that you are to strive for the ^{real} spirit of the thing.

Always begin picture at white heat, but do not imagine that any great picture was ever painted at white heat. A piece of iron has the greatest amount of work spent on it when at red heat, — mind! not when it is cold, nothing can be done with it then. So with a picture each time you return to it you must work yourself up to red heat.

For the Salvation Army suggested to Johnson that he should visit

one of the Refuges where the lowest of humanity are treated as brothers. In a workhouse everything is managed on the prison plan & no one can say that any poor wretch has ever been improved in the smallest degree by being in a workhouse. But in the Refuges every man is treated as an individual & he works for the $\frac{1}{2}$ d & for that sum he gets a right to lodging & a good supper & breakfast. These places are all self supporting. Before the supper they have a good rollicking religious service conducted by men & women who have been as bad as themselves. This service might be repulsive to us, but it is probable that it touches the hearts of some of those outcasts as nothing else would. I should call a subject

chosen from a scene like this, a truly religious subject. I do not call a painting of Christ a religious subject picture, it is an impossible subject, we cannot paint what is superhuman.

Every subject picture must have in it human interest.

Every artist feels that the weight of the figure must be on the left of the picture. It has been suggested that the greater weight of the brain is on the right & that we feel the need of something to counteract it.

Do not trouble to put in everything that you wish to ~~express~~ express. Something must be left to the imagination.

As students you must worry yourselves always. When I was

a student not a single day was allowed to pass without thinking out an idea every day that you ~~does~~ doing is a wasted day.

Bring my scribble to me, nothing is too bad to show. I will always look at them & it does not take long to administer the physic. I can polish off a great many of you in an hour.

This lecture was illustrated with drawings by Mangel, Walker &c, Also the "Last Murders" by Edmonson himself, thrown on the sheet by means of the magic lantern.

Lecture. Jan 30th 1891.

I am going to take you back 20 years when there was a very different feeling for art from what there is now. Would you all go to the R. Academy

Ex. & then see the pictures by Walker
I cannot describe to you the intense en-
thusiasm we all had when I was going
for Walker. & we were most happy in having
such a man to live up to. I feel that
if students of the present day could have
the feeling we then had for that is the
intense admiration for & love of English
Art. there would not be the constant
running after off to Paris to study.

Walker was English in everything he did.
All students who come to this School
must belong to the English School.

There is a cleverness in the French
temperament that comes out in their
painting, but which can only be partly
imitated by Englishmen. Consequently
a sort of Semi Eng. Fr. School or so
kind of School has sprung up which
is altogether bad. I used to call it the

puffy School, but their touches lately
have got a little tighter - the touches
by the way about an inch square &
meaning nothing in particular.

There is no ~~meaning~~ ^{feeling} in the modern
French School. They chiefly paint
pictures of blood shed & immorality.
I have never seen a picture by a
modern French artist of a good pure
woman. They cannot paint anything
so beautiful - all their portraits of
women like actresses of questionable
morality. - Shall we give up such
beautiful feeling as there is in many
Eng. pictures for a piece of painted
immorality? Call things by their real
name. it is no good running matters
it is my belief that it is impossible
for any student to study happily in
Paris unless they have licences

duids. Bataillon of course
is grand - his feeling is very much
the same as Walter's, allowing for
the difference of his French temperament.

But the modern Frenchman,
how clever he is & how impudent but
one expects impudence from a French
man - it cannot be tolerated in an Eng.
Artist. Why go to Paris to study
when the best French landscape
painters Corot, Pissarro &c. founded
their style on two small pictures
by Constable in the Louvre.

So to my exhibition of 42
pictures & you may come away with
a bad taste in your mouth. In the Paris
Ex. the Eng. section was the only one
that left you with a good taste.

Now go to the Royal Academy & look
most carefully at the pictures by Walter

Notice the marvelous detail, not hard
like the Rue Raphaelite School. But every
touch keeping its right place - remember
this the next time any of you try to
represent a field of grass by one flat
tint of green.

Walter had many difficulties to contend
with, he began by being an engraver
on wood having to reproduce those
abominable sketches by Thackeray -
Thackeray tried for 8 years to be an
artist & then luckily gave it up - then
he went on to Water colours & then to
oils, but he was never very success-
ful in the latter medium. His oil
paintings are simply watercolour
in oils. He used body colour, although
in his time, the old Water Col. Society
would not have pictures in which
it had been used. As if it mattered

what you would if it gave an effect-
true to nature. There are living some
fools who tell you that Chinese White
must not be used in Water colour.

Look at Walker's picture of a
garden. How many of you have tried
to paint gardens, & produced - Oh 'such
things, bushes as big as my thumb nail
intended to represent a
tiny flower.

Walker was the first man to paint
that supposed English Daylight, Daylight
that as far as I know one gets in no
other country, certainly not in Germany
France or Italy. (There is a student
over there by the pillar not paying quite
as much attention as I should like.)
In England one gets the beautiful grey
days that are yet so warm in colour,
a golden glow that is over every thing

that is most faithfully represented
by Walker. Then note his figures.
They are ideal in just the right degree
- his ploughman & sower is a Greek
god & yet only a peasant. His rustic
children too are all Cupids. His
type of a woman was the Venus
of Milo. Notice the woman in the
picture of the fish shop, how grand
she is & yet only a common little
woman. The governess & boy in the
May picture how exactly they are
in just the right place. He did
not as a rule paint the costume of
his time, his period was unre-
strained - Chinese & huge chignons
Roman costume of the present day
is quite paintable & it is to women
we look to show us what is beautiful
in dress! See "Philip in Church".

is an interesting picture too cold
in colour. I liked it but it has
never sold because the public do not
know like the ~~know~~ 'The Cross'. That is what
artists have to put-up with.
Note also the exquisite-figures in the
'Lorry' picture. Some not any bigger
than my little finger nail, but how
perfect.

This is the man who has in-
fluenced me so in my work, but
my own individuality - has always
shown itself. A man's own character
will always show in his picture.
If you have a vulgar mind, be
sure your pictures will be vulgar.
What you have to do is to refine your
mind before you can refine your pictures.

Whistler has done much harm
in Art. how silly are some of his

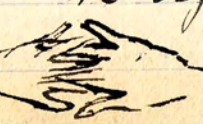
things. How much siller the attempts
of his followers. I suspect he is catching
at them all in his sleeve. I have a
suspicion that he draws as he does
because he hasn't the power to do other-
wise. He is shrewd enough to
make the general public think him
clever.


Look how much more faithful
to nature are the works of Walker.
It is easy to ~~do~~ do as Impressionists
do in Art. & leave out all that is
difficult in Art.

It is no good, & this is what I
have striven to impress on you always
to follow one particular man for his
style & their technicalities. You may
learn from a man who loves & follows
nature as Walker did, but if you
cannot put your inner self into your

pictures than you had better
break stones on the road, but
perhaps you haven't ^{got} an inner
will in that case you had better
give up altogether.

H. Hunt's pictures are very
like Walker's in some respects,
but he does not reach so high.
Probably however, Walker's work
would not have been so beautiful
if Hunt had never lived. We are
all influenced consciously or
unconsciously by previous Artists.

Sometimes I think that Keats was
very merciful to Frederick Walker, &
took him just as he reached his
utmost power. I doubt if his after
work would have been as good as
that already done. He began by
painting very loosely  as he

improved his work became tighter -
 until the climax of
his power just before his
death, his manner of working ar-
rived as near perfection as possible.
Turner partly thro' the period at
which his artistic career began,
at first worked very lightly, but as
he went on his handling got looser
& looser, until his last pictures
were hardly intelligible by reason
of it, tho' they are if studied a little
time.

I now want to speak to you of
my own work. I know you will
not misunderstand me when I
praise it. It is I found I want
to talk to you about. It is now
many years since I painted it, &
when I saw it the other day in the

South Kensington Museum all feeling of ownership had passed away & felt I could judge it as an outsider's work. I own I was delighted with it & was proud to have been able at any time to have painted it. So see it & judge for yourselves.

It was painted direct from Nature. I lived in my tent so close before those very rocks. I studied those rocks as minutely as if they had been a human face. Look also at the patch of short grass in the left hand corner - short grass is by the bye one of the most difficult things to paint & I spent 8 days over that one little patch. Not mixing it but making every touch tell. That is what I strive to make you

do in your life studies - every single touch to be true in form tone & colour. Walker's pictures are not quite true in tone but he was getting to be very nearly so. Now in a certain school nothing but tone is thought of.

The Sky in "Found" is badly painted. Intended repainting it when it left the Academy but that is against the rules of the Chomby Bequest - who bought it.

Never forget that every part of a picture must be well painted. Look at "On Sticks" on Sunday & you will see how I have altered it, loosened it & brought it together. I worked on it this morning for three hours & painted 20 bricks.

So to Nature I paint what you see, idealized by your own poetic feeling: - a woman out of the village

must not be any woman, but a
Buckingham woman. You must go in &
about the village & learn its life before
you can represent its people.
And what a village this is of ours!
I have painted 40 pictures within
a stone's throw of the school. I
think that an Eng. student can
live in this Eng. village & study art
under the most favourable circum-
stances yet can wish to go to Paris!
Be loyal to England & to me!!